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CANADA, PEGUIS FIRST NATION AND MANITOBA REACH LAND CLAIM SETTLEMENT

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PEGUIS FIRST NATION, MB (July 17, 2008) - Today the Governments of Canada and Manitoba, and the Peguis First Nation celebrated a final settlement that resolves an outstanding land claim. Chief Glenn Hudson of the Peguis First Nation, Mr. Rod Bruinooge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, and Oscar Lathlin, Manitoba Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, joined community members at a special ceremony today to mark this historic event.

"This settlement shows what can be achieved when we work together to find common solutions," said Mr. Bruinooge who attended the event on behalf of the Honourable Chuck Strahl Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. "Negotiated settlements open the door to new opportunities for investment in a brighter future, bringing economic benefits and certainty for all concerned."

"Manitoba remains fully committed to the transfer of lands to First Nations, such as Peguis, as an on-going process to help strengthen these communities," said Minister Lathlin. "We continue to make good progress on the work to complete the transfer of a total of 1.2 million acres of selected land, to the Government of Canada, as part of this process."

"The signing ceremony for the Peguis Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement is one element of the sacredness of Treaty," said Chief Glenn Hudson. "It is the fulfillment of the treaty promise to land and now we can begin the process of implementation resulting in a greater land base for all Peguis members."

The settlement will bring lasting benefits and certainty to all area residents. Under the settlement, Canada provides the Peguis First Nation with about $64 million in financial compensation.

The Peguis First Nation community is located approximately 150 kilometres north of Winnipeg. The First Nation has approximately 8,339 registered members, with 3,527 members living on reserve and 4,812 residing off reserve.

Fact Sheet: Peguis First Nation's Treaty Land Entitlement Claim

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Fact Sheet: Peguis First Nation's Treaty Land Entitlement Claim

The Governments of Canada and Manitoba have recently settled a Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claim with the Peguis First Nation. TLE claims are intended to compensate First Nations who did not receive all the land to which they were entitled under historic treaties. The Peguis First Nation is located approximately 150 kilometres north of Winnipeg.

History Of The Claim

The basis of this claim is that the Peguis First Nation did not receive the full amount of reserve land it was entitled to according to Treaty 1.

The claim relates to events that date back to 1871, when the Peguis First Nation signed Treaty 1. The Treaty said that the First Nation would receive 160 acres for each family of five in reserve land. A reserve, called the St. Peter's Reserve, was created for the First Nation, but should have included more land. Not enough land was provided because not all of the First Nation members were counted in calculating the size of the reserve when the reserve was established in 1874. There was also confusion at the time over which land was to be included as part of the reserve.

Canada accepted the claim for negotiation on June 29, 1998. Negotiations involving Canada, Manitoba and Peguis First Nation to resolve this longstanding grievance began shortly after.

As a signatory to Treaty 1, Canada has an obligation to provide the Peguis First Nation with the amount of land that was called for under the treaty. Manitoba was involved in the negotiations because of the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement of 1930 (now the Constitution Act, 1930). Under this Agreement, the Province agreed to provide unoccupied Crown land to Canada to enable it to meet its treaty obligations to Manitoba First Nations.

Overview Of The Settlement

The Peguis First Nation first held a ratification vote on the settlement on August 19, 2006. This vote failed because a majority of the eligible voters did not vote.

In keeping with the process set out in the settlement agreement, a second vote was held on September 7, 2007. In this vote, the membership of the First Nation successfully ratified the settlement. Of those members who voted, 84 per cent voted to accept the settlement. The settlement was approved by Manitoba and then by Canada.

The Peguis TLE settlement includes both financial compensation and land.

Under the settlement, Canada provided the First Nation with approximately $64 million in compensation. This money is intended to serve a number of purposes, including contributing to the First Nation's costs in negotiating, approving and implementing the settlement. Research was done during the negotiations to help negotiators determine how much compensation was fair to resolve the claim.

The First Nation developed a Trust Agreement that sets out how these settlement funds will be used and managed for the future benefit of both on- and off-reserve members. The First Nation's membership was consulted during the development of this Trust Agreement. It was also approved by First Nation members during

the vote on the settlement agreement.

Under the land-related terms of the settlement, the First Nation is entitled to obtain up to 67,499 hectares of land in Manitoba. About one third of this land (22,273 hectares) will come from provincial Crown land. The First Nation can use some of its settlement funds to purchase the other two thirds (up to 45,226 hectares) on the open market on a willing seller/willing buyer basis. The First Nation will have five years to select its Crown land and fifteen years to purchase land on the open market, with the possibility for extensions in certain circumstances.

When the First Nation selects its Crown land, Manitoba assumes a lead role in identifying any third party interests on the Crown land. Consultations with these Crown land users will be undertaken and accommodations made as appropriate to the circumstances. Legal rights will be respected and no expropriation of the interest will occur.

The settlement of this claim respects the interests of private landowners and Crown land users. Private property is not taken away from third parties to settle land claims and access to private property is assured.

The lands obtained by the Peguis First Nation as a result of this settlement will not automatically become reserve land. They must first meet the criteria from Canada's policy on reserve land and the terms of the settlement. This means that the First Nation will consult and negotiate arrangements with municipalities on issues stemming from reserve creation. This could include agreements with respect to the provision of municipal services to the lands and the development of mutually compatible land use planning. Interests held by third parties, such as leases, permits, and rights of way, would also need to be addressed.

In exchange for the compensation provided, the First Nation provides Canada and Manitoba with a full and final release for the claim. This release ensures that the claim can never be reopened.

This settlement honours an outstanding treaty obligation owed to the Peguis First Nation. It will also enable the First Nation to invest directly in Manitoba's economy through the purchase of land and the pursuit of economic development opportunities. Claims settlements not only resolve past grievances, but also bring long-term economic benefits and certainty for the benefit of First Nations and neighbouring communities.

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